

In the United States Court of Federal Claims
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS
No. 24-0297V

JENNIFER GASTELUM,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Chief Special Master Corcoran

Filed: January 8, 2025

Leigh Finfer, Muller Brazil, LLP, Dresher, PA, for Petitioner.

Benjamin Rex Eisenberg, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for Respondent.

DECISION AWARDING DAMAGES¹

On February 26, 2024, Jennifer Gastelum filed a petition for compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. §300aa-10, *et seq.*² (the “Vaccine Act”). Petitioner alleges that she suffered a shoulder injury related to vaccine administration (“SIRVA”) following an influenza vaccination she received on September 28, 2022. Petition at 1. The case was assigned to the Special Processing Unit of the Office of Special Masters.

On October 10, 2024, a ruling on entitlement was issued, finding Petitioner entitled to compensation for her SIRVA. On January 7, 2025, Respondent filed a proffer on award of compensation (“Proffer”) indicating Petitioner should be awarded \$55,000.00 in pain and suffering. Proffer at 1. In the Proffer, Respondent represented that Petitioner agrees with the proffered award. *Id.* Based on the record as a whole, I find that Petitioner is entitled to an award as stated in the Proffer.

¹ Because this Decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action taken in this case, it must be made publicly accessible and will be posted on the United States Court of Federal Claims’ website, and/or at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/uscourts/national/cofc>, in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002. 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2018) (Federal Management and Promotion of Electronic Government Services). **This means the Decision will be available to anyone with access to the internet.** In accordance with Vaccine Rule 18(b), Petitioner has 14 days to identify and move to redact medical or other information, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy. If, upon review, I agree that the identified material fits within this definition, I will redact such material from public access.

² National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755. Hereinafter, for ease of citation, all section references to the Vaccine Act will be to the pertinent subparagraph of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa (2018).

Pursuant to the terms stated in the attached Proffer, **I award Petitioner a lump sum payment of \$55,000.00 in pain and suffering in the form of a check payable to Petitioner.** This amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under Section 15(a).

The Clerk of Court is directed to enter judgment in accordance with this decision.³

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/Brian H. Corcoran

Brian H. Corcoran
Chief Special Master

³ Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), entry of judgment can be expedited by the parties' joint filing of notice renouncing the right to seek review.

**IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS**

JENNIFER GASTELUM,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

No. 24-297V

Chief Special Master Corcoran

ECF

RESPONDENT’S PROFFER ON AWARD OF COMPENSATION

On February 26, 2024, Jennifer Gastelum (“petitioner”) filed a petition for compensation under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, 42 U.S.C. §§ 300aa-1 to -34 (“Vaccine Act” or “Act”), alleging that she suffered a shoulder injury related to vaccine Administration (“SIRVA”), as defined in the Vaccine Injury Table, following administration of a seasonal influenza (“flu”) vaccine she received on September 28, 2022. Petition at 1.

On October 7, 2024, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (“respondent”) filed a Rule 4(c) report conceding entitlement to compensation, and on October 10, 2024 the Chief Special Master issued a Ruling on Entitlement finding petitioner entitled to compensation. ECF Nos. 15, 18.

I. Compensation

Respondent proffers that petitioner should be awarded \$55,000.00 in pain and suffering. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a)(4). This amount represents all elements of compensation to which petitioner is entitled under § 300aa-15(a). Petitioner agrees.

II. Form of the Award

Petitioner is a competent adult. Evidence of guardianship is not required in this case. Respondent recommends that the compensation provided to petitioner should be made through a lump sum payment as described below and requests that the Chief Special Master's decision and the Court's judgment award the following: a lump sum payment of \$55,000.00, in the form of a check payable to petitioner.¹

III. Summary of Recommended Payment Following Judgment

Lump sum payable to petitioner, Jennifer Gastelum: \$55,000.00.

Respectfully submitted,

BRIAN M. BOYNTON
Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General

C. SALVATORE D'ALESSIO
Director
Torts Branch, Civil Division

HEATHER L. PEARLMAN
Deputy Director
Torts Branch, Civil Division

TRACI R. PATTON
Assistant Director
Torts Branch, Civil Division

¹ Should petitioner die prior to entry of judgment, the parties reserve the right to move the Court for appropriate relief. In particular, respondent would oppose any award for future, unreimbursed expenses, future lost earnings and future pain and suffering.

/s/ Benjamin Eisenberg
BENJAMIN EISENBERG
Trial Attorney
Torts Branch, Civil Division
U.S. Department of Justice
P.O. Box 146 Benjamin Franklin Station
Washington D.C. 20044-0146
(202) 514-4074
Benjamin.Eisenberg@usdoj.gov

DATED: Tuesday, January 7, 2025